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AIR RECONNAISSANCE

What Should the US Position Be With Regard to the Continued Application of Aerial Reconnaissance?

Significance. For combined political and military reasons it is essential that the US reestablish an effective aerial reconnaissance of Cuba.

Photo reconnaissance conducted Monday appeared to indicate little change in the status of work at the missile sites. On the one hand some relatively minor additional construction was observed at one site while a removal of erectors from pads was observed at other sites. (~~Do we have specifics on number of erectors and sites so affected?~~) Essentially this leaves the ^{general} military capability of the missile sites unaltered, i.e., 24 ^{MRBM} sites are operationally capable of launching ballistic missiles against the US.

Explanation for Apparent Inaction in Disassembling Sites.

It would appear that this lack of evidence of disassembling of the sites may be explained in one of three ways:

1. There may be an operational time lag. Despite the fact that Khrushchev indicated that he had ordered work to stop on additional sites and a removal of equipment already in place (get exact language) it does not appear this order, assuming it was in fact given, has been acted upon. (Certainly, at least insofar as removal of equipment already in place.) It is possible

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that this can be explained by a time lag in implementation. For example, orders ~~must~~ presumably have to be given to a number of supervisors, plans must then have to be drawn, directions conveyed to technicians and workmen, etc. In addition, facilities for packing, removal and shipping must be made available pursuant to some over-all time phased plan. Conceivably all of such factors and others could act in such a way as to cause a time lag in implementing Khrushchev's order.

C [Assessment: Though possible we do not place ^a high probability on this explanation. It would have seemed possible within the time which has elapsed for work to have begun on the disassembling of the sites. Certainly if the Soviets can be presumed to be as anxious as we are to make ~~our~~ intent clear it is reasonable to expect that they would have made some obvious efforts to demonstrate that the sites were being disassembled. They could have disconnected firing cables, begun a disassembling of in-place equipment, etc.] X1

2. There may be duplicity on the part of the Soviets.

This duplicity could, of course, extend to a planned surprise usage of the missiles against the US. This we would consider to be extremely remote under the circumstances. However, there could be duplicity in another sense which is far more creditable. Having advanced concessions highly acceptable to the West it would not be out of character with previous history of dealing

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with the Soviets for them to revert to a conscious effort of procrastination. The object of such an effort would be to whittle away at the Western position without overtly appearing to do so. Indeed by mere inaction or even very slow movement the Soviets benefit from a sharp diminishing lack of momentum ~~at~~ in the US position. Moreover, it is possible and even likely that various outside pressures would in these circumstances begin to be felt by the US. The UN, neutrals and even Allies might be expected to bring pressure upon the US for patience and for not pushing the Russians too hard. As a result if the Soviets can manage to stall beyond the immediate period of heightened tensions they might be able to derive important benefits without appearing to have in any way attempted to do so. At the same time, of course, if US pressure is continued and intensified they can always speed up their actions without having lost any more face than is already the case.

Assessment: We would assign this a considerably higher probability than 1. above. It should, in any event, be possible ~~to~~ to test Soviet intentions in this connection fairly readily as is suggested below. *u*

3. Castro. Complications. It is possible that Castro is resisting Soviet concessions made to the US. At a minimum, one would expect that the Cubans would do everything possible to extract commitments from the Soviets concerning future political,

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economic and military ~~paralleled~~ relationships. While the ^{Coordinating} Castro position is not strong, assuming that the Soviets are anxious to retrench from their extended position vis-a-vis the US they would presumably be anxious not to have the Cubans throw a monkey wrench into the works. Certainly if the Cubans insisted on resisting inspection, if necessary at the point of military hostilities, or even conceivably (but we would assume remotely so) they threaten to attempt to seize the already operational ^{missile} sites, this might well give the Soviets pause. In any event, it could complicate the ease with which the disassembling operation, which itself would presumably in part be dependent upon Cuban labor, could be gotten under way.

Assessment: We would assess this as being at least equally probable with item 2. above and perhaps even somewhat more so.

It is of course possible that a combination of items 1. 2. and 3. may explain the delayed Soviet response or there may be other explanations we have not predicted. However, whatever the motivation the military and political effects are the same. Militarily the missile capability remains and thus poses precisely the same military problem for the US which was foreseen when the President made his pronouncement on October 22. Politically, the failure ^{of the Sovs.} to carry through on their announced intentions has already caused a delay which, if permitted to continue, might seriously erode the Western political posture. Assuming a conscious intent

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on the part of the Soviets to procrastinate then it is predictable that every day we delay taking action ^{will} result in it being just that much more difficult for us ever to move. B1

CONCLUSION.

The conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing is that we should at once reinstitute a heavy aerial reconnaissance [taking appropriate paralleled diplomatic actions to make our intent crystal clear. Specifically, we should notify the Soviets through secret diplomatic channels (either directly or through U Thant) that our reconnaissance indicates no effort has been made to disassemble the missiles. We should indicate that while we are aware of the Soviet specific offers for working out inspection, surveillance, etc., by the UN, and are willing to work rapidly toward reaching agreement on implementation of such measures, this is no reason why some overt evidence of disassembling cannot take place. We should therefore indicate our intent to reinstitute a heavy schedule of air reconnaissance which we assume will quickly begin to demonstrate concretely that missile sites are being disassembled. We should also make it clear to the Cubans (presumably through U Thant) as well as the Russians that we will not passively accept further firings on our ~~XXXXXXXX~~ reconnaissance aircraft and that a reoccurrence of such firing will result in air to ground strikes against Cuban imple- 7
ments. 6

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